

would have given him  
everything ...."

yes, it will be a very  
lachrymose finale  
but there's not a great deal  
I can do.

right now I am going to walk  
down the stairway for another  
bottle of  
wine,  
it's a warm September a.m. and  
the cats have been fed.

#### VOICE OUT OF THE VOID

she phoned me about it from a far away  
state.

"I could never argue with you,"  
she told me,  
"you'd just run out the door.  
my husband's not like that,  
he sticks like glue.  
he beats me."

"I never believed in discussions,"  
I said, "there's nothing to  
discuss."

"you're wrong," she said, "you should  
try to communicate."

"'communicate' is an overused word like  
'love'," I told her.

"but don't you think two people can  
'love'?" she asked.

"not if they try to 'communicate',"  
I answered.

"you're talking like an asshole,"  
she said.

"we're having an argument,"  
I said.

"no," she said, "we're trying to  
communicate."

"I've got to leave," I said and hung



up, then took the phone off the hook.

I looked at the phone.  
what they didn't understand was that  
sometimes there was nothing to  
save  
except a personal vindication of a  
personal viewpoint  
and that was what was going to cause  
that blinding white flash  
one of these days.

I walked across the room and  
snapped on the  
tv.

#### THE CONDITION BOOK

the long days at the track have indented themselves  
into me:

I am the horses, the jocks, I am six furlongs, seven  
furlongs, I am a mile and one sixteenth, I am a  
handicap, I am all the colors of all the silks, I am all  
the photo finishes, the accidents, the deaths, the  
last place finishers, the breakdowns, the failure of  
the toteboard, the dropped whip and the numb pain  
of the dream not come true in thousands and thousands  
and thousands of faces, I am the long drive home in the  
dark, in the rain, I am decades and decades and decades  
of races run and won and lost and run again and I am  
myself sitting with a program and a Racing Form.  
I am the racetrack, my ribs are the wooden rails, my  
eyes are the flashes of the toteboard, my feet are  
hooves and there is something riding on my back, I am  
the last curve, I am the home stretch, I am the longshot  
and the favorite, I am the exacta, the daily double and  
the pick 6.  
I am humanely destroyed, I am the horseplayer who  
became the  
racetrack.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA